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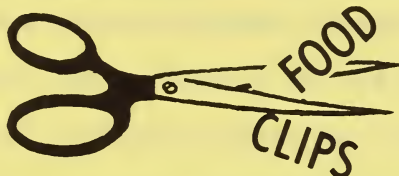
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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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If you hold citrus fruits too long at cold temperatures, their skins may become pitted and the flesh may discolor.

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How do you peel a peach? Dip the fruit into boiling water for about 45 seconds -- then into cold water. Then you can grasp the loosened skin of the fruit and peel gently, using the dull edge of a knife. (Also works nicely with apricots.)

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Preparing a grapefruit half? Run a sharp knife around each section to loosen it from the membrane and skin. If you peel the whole fruit, remove all of the white inner peel with a sharp knife.

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Dried fruits such as raisins, dates, prunes, peaches, and apricots are all good sources of iron.

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Pineapples should be used promptly after purchase. If necessary to hold them for a day or two, keep them in the refrigerator.

TOO MUCH SOY?

If soy protein is good, why not add more? Here's why! If you've been adding textured soy protein to ground beef -- trying to stretch those meat dollars -- you may be doing a good job. On the other hand, if you've been adding too much soy protein, you may have a product more like toasted soybeans than ground beef. Too much is not good--nor tasty.

The addition of as much as 20 percent of soy protein won't measurably affect the palatability of the hamburgers, according to scientists with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Commercial textured soy protein, however, is different in that it can sometimes be added at a greater rate since it contains spices which mask some of the soybean flavor.

Experiments conducted with USDA's Agricultural Research Service and the University of Maryland showed that though meat tenderness increases with the addition of soy protein, flavor decreases.

"BACK TO SCHOOL" LUNCHES

—With new recipes

If your youngster isn't enthusiastic about the school lunch menus this year -- he may be able to blame his peer group. Some of the recipes have been "kid-tested". Youngsters from the fifth and sixth grades in selected schools in New Jersey were asked to act as "testers" for some of the new recipes for the school lunch programs. The youngsters were asked to taste the food and then make evaluations on a score card for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

This innovative departure from the manner of testing recipes for USDA was coordinated by the Food and Nutrition Service and the Agricultural Research Service which put guidelines together for the 24 taste-testing sessions. Twelve main dish recipes were tested (twice each) so that the youngsters could evaluate their meals over a period of three months. Dishes tested included baked beans, cheese-rice casserole, liver creole, beef, rice-split pea casserole, tamale pie, chicken and noodles, savory pork, pork and sauerkraut, bean tacos, beef-macaroni-tomato casserole, peanut butter meat balls, and lasagna.

Acceptability cards were given to the youngsters so that (after eating) they could evaluate the recipe for the day. It was interesting, to those who were recording the data, that the youngsters seemed to detect new or different spices or condiments. They could tell whether or not an ingredient was fully cooked or needed more time on the stove. Their tastes were more sophisticated in matters of taste than the adults expected.

Information from the taste-testing will also assist on the ongoing revisions of USDA's publication -- "Quantity Recipes for Type A School Lunches."

WHAT'S NEW

—in Kansas

The age-old art of needlepoint tapestry, one of the projects of Kansas homemakers, is regaining its popularity due to the interest of Extension cultural arts specialists who have been exploring ideas for the American bicentennial celebration. Each of the 105 Kansas counties are represented with an original colorful needlepoint square as part of a project to show off the life-style and heritage of Kansans.

Extension homemaker councils, who sponsored competition for the needlepoint designs, included ideas from the county historical societies as well as the Chamber of Commerce, plus many original ideas from homemakers. The only guidelines were the size of the design -- 12 x 12 inch finished size on a 14 x 14 inch canvas in any desired needlepoint stitch.

The growth of the Great Plains area in the pioneer days in Kansas is depicted on the needlepoint squares which were put together, four squares wide and five long, with strips of maroon, velvet-like ribbon framing each square. One of the interesting aspects of the project is the variety of ideas expressing visual multi-color work of the agricultural state. Each square emphasizes what the county is best known for.

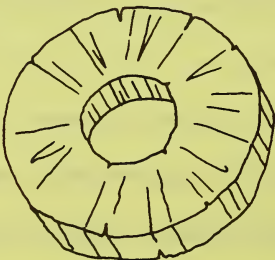
Slides of each entry with a tape narration and printed script about each design has been compiled and is available from the county Extension offices.



FRESH FRUITS

- ...many remain at their best for only a few days -- all fruits require careful handling and storage to conserve quality.
- ...should be sorted -- damaged fruits immediately discarded.
- ...most fruits should be washed and dried before storing -- but NOT berries and cherries.
- ...unripe fruits should be left to ripen in open air at room temperature, not in direct sunlight.
- ...fresh fruits that may be stored in the refrigerator and retain high quality --- apples, eating ripe (1 week); apricots--3 to 5 days; avocados--3 to 5 days. Blackberries, 1 or 2 days; blueberries, 3 to 5 days; cherries -- 1 to 2 days. Cranberries -- 1 week. Figs -- 1 to 2 days. Grapes 3 to 5 days. Nectarines -- 3 to 5 days.
- ...pineapples should be used promptly after purchase. If necessary to hold them for a day or two, keep them in the refrigerator.

During hot humid weather, dried fruits should be refrigerated. Store cooked dried fruits in covered containers in the refrigerator and use within a few days.



NOTE: Additional information for the MEDIA and photographs (when applicable) may be obtained from: Shirley Wagener, Editor of Food and Home Notes, Room 535A, Office of Communication/Press Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Or telephone 202-447-5898.
